

AD CLERUM – MAY 2011

My dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

It is the early hours of the morning following the close of the Sam Moswathe Diocesan Tribunal. Although not yet public, both Sam and I have already been given a summary of the judgement findings and the Tribunal's recommendation that he be deposed as a priest. I am in a state of deep emotional turmoil – disappointed, sad, and shattered for him and his family and yet also full of anger at what has happened and why it happened. I wonder if, like me, Sam is unable to sleep. I wonder what emotions are coursing through his mind at this time, and whether he too is wondering what went so wrong that a gifted priest like himself should find himself at the end of his ministry.

The 'sad' emotions are easy to understand. St Paul instructs us to weep together with those who weep (Rom. 12:15) and there can be nothing but sadness, mourning and weeping when a brother is broken and hurting. We are all affected by the judgement; all of us diminished by what has taken place. I feel devastated both for him and for his family and grieve for them and with them for the pain of the past years and the pain and hardship that lies ahead.

Sam's struggle with alcohol goes back at least a decade. For some of that time it was largely hidden from view, but increasingly became public knowledge. In the beginning Sam doubtless denied that there was a problem, but as the addiction grew so it began to affect Sam's behaviour and his relationship with others. As always, it has been his family that has suffered the most and been the most traumatised. Seven years ago Sam resigned from his parish and went into a rehabilitation programme. The diocese bore the costs of that programme and supported Sam and his family financially for about nine months until we were able once again to place him back in parish ministry. Initially things went reasonably well. Sam had a loyal support group who tried to keep him from drinking. Sam, too, seemed to be trying. But as time went on the situation deteriorated and complaints began coming in – from the parish, the community, the diocese and even from other dioceses. Eventually the situation was such that I was forced to act. Sam chose to go the route of a formal Diocesan Tribunal rather than the more pastoral route of an Informal Tribunal. And the rest, as they say, is history.

I have told Sam's story not in order to shame him, or blame him. Everything that I have said is common knowledge throughout the diocese. I have told his story because it raises issues about how we operate as church and about *our* failure to be a place of nurture, support, love and healing for each other. What follows is to some extent a reflection of what has happened to Sam, but includes comments drawn from other, often radically different, situations. And while this reflection began as a reflection on a clergyperson, it could equally apply to anyone in our pews.

My first comment relates to the patterns of drinking in our society. South Africa has one of the highest per capita alcohol intake rates in the world which translates, I suppose inevitably, into one of the highest alcoholism rates in the world. The statistics are frightening:-

- 67% of people arrested for domestic violence were drunk at the time of the alleged offence;
- 48% of trauma patients admitted to the Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital are drunk;
- 50% of all motor accidents, 60% of pedestrian deaths and 46% of all non-natural deaths are alcohol related.
- 75% of stabbings, 40% of shootings and 58% of blunt instrument homicides involve alcohol.
- Children whose parents drink are more likely to drink themselves and a child who drinks is 60% more likely to repeat a grade than those who do not. They are also more likely to engage in risky sex and more likely to be sexually exploited.

With statistics like that all of us should be very abstemious. Where we do drink it should only be in moderation. And yet drinking to excess is common in many of our church communities (with all the attendant negative consequences), and people continue to ply others with liquor long after the person has visibly had too much to drink. Clergy with alcohol problems and who refuse a drink have told me of how they have been pressured to drink by members of the congregation (including churchwardens and fellow clergy) who are aware of their drinking problem. As one priest once said to me, "It is almost as if they want to see you fall and fail." Sam's drinking was aided and abetted by both clergy and members of the parish and community, and everyone who drank with him played a part in his ultimate downfall. As Christians we should be setting an example to others and be helping them to be all that God intends them to be.

A second comment relates to the isolation, loneliness and stress that seems to be common to clergy all over the world. Sadly, the leadership in many of our parishes seem to be more adversarial than collegial and where there is tension and conflict among the leaders the parish will be divided into factions and the kingdom of God will not grow. Such tension simply heightens the sense of loneliness and isolation of the clergy and, instead of being nurtured and built up by the community of faith, the priest is battered and broken down. And then things go wrong – and we who have participated in the conflict have played a part in the failure of the priest and the damage done to the kingdom. Sadly, professional jealousy and gossip among the clergy often means that we cannot even look to our fellow clergy for support.

I also want to talk about the conspiracy of silence that cloaks so much of our wrongdoing. Instead of challenging wrongdoing we remain silent and even hide the truth. We are, it has been said, as sick as our secrets. Brokenness needs healing, not hiding. And by covering up and hiding it we allow it to grow and become even more damaging, both for the person and the community of faith. Edmund Burke said, "All that it takes for evil to flourish is for good men to remain silent." Silence about sin and brokenness is complicity in what is going on.

That conspiracy of silence is bad enough; what is far worse is when people actively seek to suppress the truth and so allow evil to flourish. When people are intimidated so that they will not speak the truth, when people and their families are openly threatened and where property is damaged and people injured, then Satan reigns in glory. I was saddened that such things happened in Kagiso. Thankfully in this case no one was physically injured, perhaps only because they refused to testify. But it is sad, and misguided, when such things happen. The motive may well have been to protect Sam in a disciplinary hearing, but, if successful, would only have succeeded in allowing Sam to continue in his own self-destruction and that of the parish and the wider church of God. The damage done to the

people of God in what is now a hurting and divided parish has been enormous. And the extent to which the church has been damaged and discredited in the eyes of non-churchgoing people is even greater. Protecting Sam has come at great cost.

I commend the young people of the parish who had the courage to stand and be counted. One young person in the parish commented some time ago that young people no longer had respect for the church, nor did they want to come to it, and that unless something was done to rectify the situation even those young people who were still loyal would leave. And it was out of a concern for the parish that they spoke both honestly and courageously. I am deeply saddened that a priest whom I summonsed to give evidence and who spoke the truth bravely even though it was against his will, has been vilified by a number of his fellow clergy. What he said in the hearing was what clergy have been gossiping about; in his case he spoke truthfully about what he had seen, but spoke also of a his own sense of failure in not having adequately supported someone who had served as his curate. What he said was loving and caring, both of Sam and his family, and of the parish that he had served in.

And finally, I want to make a comment about the way we shift the blame onto others and make them responsible for what has happened. It is an aspect of human behaviour that dates right back to the garden of Eden. But it is not Godly because it is an attempt to evade the truth by shifting the responsibility for what has happened onto others. We are all responsible for our own actions and responsible for the consequences of those actions. When we do things that are sinful and hurtful to ourselves and others, we and no one else is to blame. We must learn to take responsibility for our actions, confess our failings and sins, repent of the hurt and damage we have caused, and begin to walk again in newness of life. That is the pattern through which we grow into spiritual maturity.

Sam needs help if he is ever to recover. This may well be the wake-up call he needs to bring him to the point where he will accept the loving ministry of those who can bring healing. But Sam is only one of many in our parishes who is broken and hurting, either because of their own actions or because of what has been done to them. All need our help; truth must be spoken, but must be spoken only out of a love for Christ and Christ's love for that person. And speaking, like intercession, demands that we play our part in the ongoing healing process.

Pray for Sam and his family. Pray also for me and all who are in positions of leadership and trust. And pray for all in this broken world, that they may experience the healing power of resurrection life.

For self reflection:

1. When have I drunk immoderately, behaved in inappropriate ways as a result of drink, or encouraged others to drink more than they should? Do my patterns of drinking set a good example to my children and to others? If not, what steps do I need to take to rectify the problem?
2. When in my life have I been complicit in evil by remaining silent in the face of wrongdoing? Pray and confess your failure and sin, and resolve by God's grace to speak the truth in boldness in the future.
3. When in my life have I spoken out and challenged wrongdoing, but done so not out of a real love and concern for the person, but out of a desire to hurt, get even, or make myself look good? Pray, and confess your failure and sin, and resolve by God's grace only to speak out of love and concern for others.

For group discussion:

1. Where are there conspiracies of silence – in our homes? Our parish? Our communities? How can we break the silence in ways that will lead to the healing and restoration of the community?

May our lives be a testimony to the wonder of resurrection life



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Reading Recommendations

A number of you commented on my reference in my Maundy Thursday sermon to the two triumphal entries of Palm Sunday. I came across it in “**The Last Week**” by Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan. It is a detailed study of the events from Palm Sunday to Easter. It is well worth reading and, although perhaps a little late for this year’s Holy Week, should prove valuable in the future.

For those of you who feel that Holy Week is behind us, you might enjoy “**The Quiet Revolution**” by Peter Hannan SJ. Subtitled “Rediscovering Adult Faith in Today’s World,” it is a study of the culture of the world as against that of the kingdom of God.

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Telephoning the Bishop

I must apologise to those of you who have been battling to get hold of me. Our Telkom telephone lines were struck by lightening almost 3 weeks ago and, despite being reported a number of times, have not yet been repaired. To make matters worse, my nice new Apple iPhone went on the blink on Maundy Thursday and has had to go in for repairs. So, with my PA away until Wednesday, it means that for the present, I can be contacted only by e-mail.

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Responsible Preparation for the South African Local Government Election

Below is a copy of a pastoral letter from the Catholic Bishops of Southern Africa to the Catholic community and all people of goodwill. I think it speaks for itself and is worth some thought and prayer before the elections:-

“The forthcoming municipal elections present us once again with an opportunity to influence the direction our country is taking. We are grateful to Almighty God that we can confidently anticipate a free and fair election process, the eighth in our 17 years of democracy.

Every citizen has the right to vote, to participate in the choosing of public representatives, and to give a mandate to those entrusted with governance. But it is

more than simply a right – it is a duty which rests on every eligible voter. Each of us must use our vote wisely and thoughtfully, in order to help ensure that our cities, towns and districts are run by honest and competent people, to the benefit of all, especially the poor and the vulnerable.

When we vote in a municipal election we are in effect passing a judgment about the way in which some of our most basic needs are being met. Are we satisfied with the provision of services such as water and electricity? Are our streets and public facilities clean and safe? Are we treated with respect and courtesy by municipal officials?

The answers to these questions can help us to decide whether to vote for the same people or party as before, or whether it is time to give different candidates a chance. As we said before the national elections in 2009, 'our first loyalty must be to our fellow citizens, and to the good of our country as a whole, not to a specific party or leader.'

In these elections people living in cities and towns will be able to vote both for a party and for individual candidates standing as ward councillors. These are the people who should be in very close touch with your day-to-day concerns and living conditions. They should have a strong track record of community involvement and service and should be people with high moral standards and integrity.

Unfortunately, many public representatives in South Africa choose to enter the world of politics because they want power, wealth and status, and not because they are committed to serving the public. This tendency harms our democracy and results in us as citizens not enjoying its benefits. It leads to corruption, nepotism and self-advancement, at the cost of service-delivery and the well-being of our communities.

Such people do not deserve our support. If we continue to vote for them, we will have only ourselves to blame if our municipal services crumble and our neighbourhoods are not properly maintained.”

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Spiritual Formation

Clergy Day: The next Clergy Day will take place at St Mark, Northriding on Tuesday the 3rd of May beginning at 09h00.

There will be a meeting for all **Self Supporting Clergy** at St Thomas, Linden on Saturday the 7th of May beginning at 09h00. All Self Supporting Clergy are expected to attend.

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Provincial News

- Please visit our website home page on www.anglicanjoburg.org.za to read the Archbishop's Easter **Laos**.
- On the 7th of May the **Diocese of George** will consecrate their new Bishop. Please pray for the Diocese, the Bishop elect Brian Marajh and for his wife Lynn and their children Melony and Craig. We pray too for all those, including our own Bishop and Susan, who will be travelling to George for the occasion.

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Diocesan Family News

- Please find a copy of the **May Prayer Diary** attached.
- The Parish of **St Augustine, Orange Grove** is celebrating their Patronal Festival and 75 years of being in Orange Grove after their move there from Doornfontein in 1936. Visiting clergy with past associations with the parish have been invited to take the Sunday services throughout the month. You are invited to attend these services and to join them for the Patronal Festival celebration on Sunday the 29th of May where Bishop Duncan will preside. All services take place at 08h30 and should you be attending you are requested to contact Lynda Shimmin or the Parish office for catering purposes.
- **Good Governance Workshops** have been scheduled for the 7, 14 & 21 May 2011 at the Parish of Christ the King, Sophiatown. The workshops will commence 08h00 with registration and tea and will end at 12h30. Booking is essential. Please contact Tumi on boitumelo.masemola@anglicanjoburg.org.za or fax 011 333 3053 to book your place.
- James Riadore, who is well known to many in this diocese as one of the most respected organ builders at Cooper, Gill and Tomkins died on 1 May. We remember with gratitude his wisdom and advice and his ready willingness to help whenever there was a problem.
- "Following back surgery during Holy Week to repair damage as a result of a fractured vertabrae, Godfrey Henwood is now back at home, but confined to bed for the next 6 weeks. Please keep him and Wendy in your prayers during this long and difficult time of convalescence.

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Moves and Placements

- **Sue Ray** has been appointed as Rector of the Parish of St John, Roodepoort with effect from the 1st of July 2011.
- **Philip Louw** officially commences his duties as Rector of the Parish of St Francis, Newclare on the 1st of May. We would like to offer him a warm welcome to our Diocese and assure him of our support and prayers as he begins his ministry here.
- You will all know that **Sam Moswathe** was suspended pending a disciplinary hearing. At his request that hearing was a Formal Diocesan Tribunal, chaired by Bishop Peter Lee at the appointment of the Archbishop. Sam was found guilty and the Tribunal recommended that he be deposed. Without good reason to rule otherwise, I have followed their recommendation. This means that Sam's license to exercise ministry has been revoked and that he ceases, immediately, to be a priest of this Diocese. Over the years we have journeyed with Sam and tried to assist him and I am deeply saddened that things have come to this end. Please hold him, Nthabiseng and the children in your prayers.

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Birthdays and Wedding Anniversaries

We would like to wish the following people a very happy birthday and wedding anniversary:-

Date	May	June
01		Thato Molipa John & Susan Alexander
03		Ian Macintosh Diana Thorburn
04		Mabatho Rakale Andre & Yvonne Payne
05	Gerard Sharp	Basil Matthews
06	Rob Hofmeyer	
07		Ivy Matthews Jerry & Beryl Bailey
08	Andrew Philip Sue Ray	Diana Keartland
09		Fred Robb
11		Maud Khumalo Lee-Ann Minakium
12	Motlale Namo	
13	Maureen Rowland-Aitken	
14		Keith Brown
15		Maria Mhlongo Boitumelo Masemola
17	Corny Mphaki	
18		Jack Williamson
19	Vicky Moroa	
20	Gwyn Slade	
22	Margaret Steward	Abe Mokgohlane Eve Abrahams
23	Pearl Mokgohlane	Neo Motlabane Neo & Beatrice Motlabane Basil & Ivy Matthews
24	Charles May	
25	Nosipho Matubatuba	
26		Tim & Jos Mncube
27	Yvonne Payne	
28	Ntombi Molefe Tshepo Matubatuba Mlajeni & Nokwezi Dodo John & Amy Herbert	
30	Millie Smyth	

Should there be any errors or omissions in the above dates please contact Noxolo at the Diocesan office.

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Dates for Diary

MAY		Diocesan	Bishop
Sunday	1	WORKERS DAY	
Monday	2	PUBLIC HOLIDAY / JDACF Fun Day	
Tuesday	3	Independent Schools Open / Clergy Day	Clergy Day
Thursday	5		George Diocese for Consecration
Friday	6		George Diocese for Consecration
Saturday	7	STILIM & FOX I / Archdeaconry Region 4 Clergy & Lay Rep meeting / Self Supporting Clergy Day / Good Governance Workshop	Consecration of Bishop of George
Sunday	8		George Diocese for Consecration
Tuesday	10	Archdeaconry Region 1 Clergy Day	Anglican Educational Trust
Thursday	12	Discernment Conference Panelist Meeting	Pilgrimage to Israel
Saturday	14	FOX II / Parish Minister Training / Archdeaconry Region 1 Council Meeting / Good Governance Workshop	Pilgrimage to Israel
Wednesday	18	PUBLIC HOLIDAY FOR VOTING	Pilgrimage to Israel
Thursday	19		Pilgrimage to Israel
Friday	20		Pilgrimage to Israel
Saturday	21	Ordinands / Transformers / Discernment Conference / POST / Good Governance Workshop	Pilgrimage to Israel
Sunday	22	Discernment Conference	Pilgrimage to Israel
Monday	23		Pilgrimage to Israel
Wednesday	25	Management Meeting / Trustees	Management Meeting
Saturday	28	Anglicare	
Sunday	29		Pastoral visit: North Riding / St John's College Confirmation

JUNE		Diocesan	Bishop
Thursday	2	ASCENSION DAY / Diocesan Office Closed	
Saturday	4	STILIM & FOX I	
Sunday	5		Pastoral visit: TBC
Tuesday	7	Clergy Day	Clergy Day
Saturday	11	FOX II / Region 2 Archdeaconry Meeting / Parish Minister Training	FOX "Ministry in All its variety" 13h45- 15h30
Sunday	12	PENTECOST	Pastoral visit: Bez Valley
Thursday	16	YOUTH DAY	
Saturday	18	Ordinands / Transformers	Bishop meets with Churchwardens, Randfontein 8h30 - 12h00
Sunday	19	Choir Fellowship, Rockville	Pastoral visit: Coronationville
Friday	24	Government Schools Close	
Saturday	25	POST	Diocesan Conference
Sunday	26	Archdeaconry Region 1 Pulpit Exchange	Pastoral visit: Bryanston

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General Notices

- The Parish of St George, Parktown will be running a 7 week **Marriage Alpha** course every Wednesday starting at 19h00 on the 4th of May. This course comes highly recommended for new and old married couples alike. For more details please visit our website on www.anglicanjoburg.org.za or contact Chris or Daryl Jennings on 011 782 4393.

- The Parish of Christ Church, Mayfair will be hosting a course entitled “**The ABC’s of Teaching Sunday School**” every Saturday from 7th of May to the 18th of June from 09h00 – 13h00. The cost of the course is R70. Please visit our website for more information and to find a copy of the application form.
- The next **Preaching Course** will take place at the Parish of Holy Cross from the 23rd to the 26th of June. For more details or to book your place please contact Nomawethu on 011 936 1394.
- The **Southern African Faith Communities’ Environment Institute** (SAFCEI) is calling for young people of faith who would like to take action to respond to climate change to apply to become a Youth Ambassador. Please see the attached document for more information and the application form.

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